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U.S. Accusations of Russia 'Harassing' Diplomats Worsen Bilateral Relations — Foreign Ministry

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The U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

The Russian Foreign Ministry has denounced allegations by the U.S. State Department that American diplomats in the country are suffering from "continuous interference" by Russian security services.

"Our diplomats in U.S. are constantly facing provocations from the FBI and CIA, whose employees do not hesitate to use illegal methods such as psychological pressure," Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova told RIA Novosti Tuesday.

The accusations only worsen relations between two countries, Zakharova said. "They [the claims] start to aggravate the problem instead of solving it," she said, Interfax reported.

The U.S. State Department has accused the Russian intelligence services of "continuous interference" with American diplomats posted in the country.

Spokesperson Elizabeth Trudeau made the statement on the U.S. State Department website Monday following recent media reports of alleged harassment.

“Over the past two years, harassment and surveillance of our diplomatic personnel in Moscow by security personnel and traffic police have increased significantly. Other western embassies have reported the same thing,” Trudeau said.

“The safety and well-being of our diplomatic and consular personnel abroad are things we take very seriously. We have raised and we will continue to raise at the highest level any incidents inconsistent with protections guaranteed by international law,” she said.

Trudeau also denied allegations that Russian diplomatic personnel in the United States had been similarly pressured.

American newspaper The Washington Post reported Monday that U.S. diplomats were being specifically trained to cope with pressure from Russian authorities.

The newspaper report claimed that Russian security services had routinely followed diplomats or their family members and paid reporters to write negative stories about them.

Russian agents have allegedly broken into diplomats' homes to rearrange furniture, turn on lights, and, in one case, defecate on a living room carpet.

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